

Minutes of the meeting of the Estates Committee held on Tuesday 20th January 2009

Membership:

- *Mr Paul Monaghan (Chair)
- *Mr Keith Blackwell
- *Mrs Susan Effendowicz
- *Mr Daniel Hill
- *Mr David Lavarack
- *Mrs Robyn Ross
- *Mrs Jo Canessa
- *Mr Michael Butlin
- *Mr Terry Price
- *Denotes present

Advising officers

- *Mr Dan Dean
- *Mr Geoffrey Bowley

In attendance:

- *Mrs Sue Gunter – Clerk to the Corporation
- *Mr Mike O’Hanlon – MEA (Items 1 –5)

1.REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked all present if they had any interests to declare with regard to the agenda of the meeting. Paul Monaghan declared an interest under Item 5 in that he is doing some work with the Highways department in Surrey.

2.APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - None

3.MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2008 were agreed subject to a correction under Item 7 where “need to display an energy certificate” should read, “need a Display Energy Certificate”.

4.MATTERS ARISING

Item 5 Future accommodation strategy

Keith Blackwell had spoken to Nick Wilson, Director for Schools and Learning at Surrey County Council (SCC) about the Local Authority's building strategy. He had been advised that SCC was not to receive substantial funding under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme for a few years and that the College should vigorously pursue any available current opportunities through the Learning Skills Council (LSC).

It was clear that SCC had not yet developed a strategy relating to sixth form colleges.

The College had revised its plans to ensure that demolition of newer buildings was kept to a minimum and the aim was also to keep the footprint of any new build to a minimum.

Item 6 Health and Safety Report

Dan Dean reported that the Health and Safety Committee had considered the action needed to ensure that staff were fully aware of the Health and Safety policy and the following steps had been taken:-

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- All job descriptions had been reviewed and Health and Safety responsibilities added where necessary.
- The policy had been discussed at the Heads of Department meeting in September.
- The whole policy was on the College portal.

In addition, Health and Safety had been discussed at the last S7 Deputy Principals' meeting, with College policies being compared and exchanged and initiatives for future collaboration discussed. It was clear from this meeting that the College was in the forefront of best practice.

Item 8 Student Items

Request for increase in the number of water fountains

Geoff Bowley had called in a specialist firm to look at this. They had advised against installing additional water fountains on Health and Safety grounds due to possible contamination of the water supply, in particular over periods of no or little use. They had recommended the use of chilled water dispensers instead. These would involve considerable cost to run. Keith Blackwell confirmed that students could buy bottled water or bring it from home. However, in either case, the practice was often to refill the bottles from the water fountains and Daniel Hill felt that students could not afford to buy multiple bottles. After a wide-ranging discussion, in which the committee was sympathetic to the request but concerned at the Health and Safety implications of the advice received to date, it was agreed that further advice should be sought.

Action: Geoff Bowley to seek further advice from another water provision specialist.

Doors between the Canteen and the Courtyard.

The bolts had been fixed. A quote of £8,500 had been received for the automation of the doors. All

viewed this as excessive and both Keith Blackwell and Daniel Hill agreed that this would simply result in the doors being permanently open. It was agreed that no further action needed to be taken on this.

Student Council Office

Geoff Bowley reported that he had looked into the possibility of enlarging the current office but had concluded that this was not possible due to the physical constraints around it. There were no other suitable areas for such an office within the main College Buildings, but Keith Blackwell suggested that once the portakabin currently being used by the estates team was vacated, this may provide acceptable accommodation. The committee felt that this was a good solution and Daniel Hill agreed on behalf of the Student Council to look at the portakabin to see if it was suitable.

Action: Student Council to consider whether the portakabin would be suitable as an office for them.

Keith Blackwell added that the provision of a Student Council Office in a central College location would be included in any plans for the rebuilding of the College.

5.FUTURE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

Keith Blackwell reported that the LSC had announced this month that all consideration of capital projects would be put on hold. It appears that the number of project proposals received had been both more costly and more complicated than anticipated and that the LSC was seeking a period of review and consolidation.

There would be a further meeting of the full LSC Council on 4th March at which the way forward would be considered.

In the meantime, the College's feasibility study had been completed. The favoured option of keeping the sports and arts blocks and demolishing the rest of the site had been discussed with Isabelle Wragg, the LSC Regional Property Adviser, and she had been supportive of this approach. It seemed prudent not to invest excessive time and energy into this aspect of the project until the outcome of the March meeting was known.

Keith Blackwell confirmed that at the moment, there was an LSC-imposed moratorium on both grant funding and the submission of proposals. However, both he and Mike O'Hanlon agreed that the College should continue to pursue the planning issues associated with the scheme in order to be ready to submit detailed proposals as soon as the LSC announced that they would receive them again. Mike O'Hanlon confirmed that the favoured option could operate either with or without access from Hampton Court Way. It was agreed that it would be sensible to meet with the Borough Council again to progress planning issues and that the College should prepare a grant application to progress the Application in Principle. The College still had funds which had been set aside for the project and it was agreed unanimously that they should proceed as outlined above using the funds already earmarked within the budget.

Finally, Keith Blackwell said that he felt strongly that the project should not be phased, but should be carried out as a single project even if that meant there was a delay in the start date. The committee

agreed with this. He also said that there was a possibility that the College may only need to fund in the region of £3m rather than the £4m previously discussed, according to initial advice from our financial consultants FE Associates. Terry Price was concerned that in the current climate it might prove difficult to borrow sums of this nature. There was also concern that the LSC might top slice the funding, thus diluting or destroying major projects. It was agreed that there were a number of uncertainties which were beyond the College's control at this stage. Mike O'Hanlon suggested that if, after the 4th March meeting, it was apparent that the College would not get LSC funding for its proposals it would need to look at what it could do on its own.

The committee thanked Mike O'Hanlon for his input and he left the meeting at this point.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Robyn Ross had been unable to attend the last proposed Governor Health and Safety tour.

Action: Geoff Bowley and Robyn Ross to arrange a Governor Health and Safety Inspection before the next meeting.

Geoff Bowley advised that the annual Fire Risk Assessment, which he had previously done, had been carried out by a Health and Safety consultant in January. The College fire risk had been assessed as "tolerable" which rated 2 on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being "trivial" and 5 being "intolerable".

Only minor issues had been identified. The most urgent of these was a fire door which was sticking and this had been dealt with.

He further reported that there had been two buildings surveys carried out in November. The first, for insurance liability purposes, had only identified two points for action, both of which were already in hand. The first was the employment of a third party to carry out the Fire Risk Assessment as referred to above. The second related to the overhead lights in the theatre and the working at height regulations. The College had agreed to buy an extended work platform ("cherry picker") to be used for any work in this area.

There had also been a property survey, and again the outcome had been good. A point for discussion had been the nature of the materials to be used in rebuilding the workshop which had burnt down. This was already being discussed with the insurers. Keith Blackwell confirmed that the workshop would remain in situ even with a major rebuild.

7. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE WORK

Geoff Bowley reported the following items:-

- Minor repairs
- Completion of the five-year electrical testing. He was waiting for estimates for those items requiring attention.

- Portable Appliance Testing was being carried out at the moment.
- There had been an ongoing problem with pigeons in the lift shaft of Y Block. The shaft had been cleaned out and some bird proofing measures introduced.
- The dust extraction system in the design workshop had been rearranged.
- The College now had two Display Energy Certificates, one for the art block and one covering the rest of the College. The gradings for the College main buildings is 'D' and the Art Block 'C', on a score of A-G, both of which are satisfactory.

8. STUDENT ITEMS

Daniel Hill reported that he had been asked to raise the following issues:-

- Student Council offices, which had been dealt with under Matters Arising.
- A request for full-length mirrors in the girls' toilets. Keith Blackwell felt that this should not be confined to girls only and suggested that they could be

installed in selected girls and boys toilets, subject to available wall space.

- Students were concerned that the delay in the sensor opening mechanism in the doors leading from the LRC to the courtyard could cause injury.

Action: Geoff Bowley to organise mirrors in selected toilets/changing rooms in the College and to arrange for the problem with the door sensor to be investigated.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday 30th April 2009